

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-9 and 12-33 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1-4, 10 and 11 having been canceled, Claims 5-7 and 12, 13, 15 and 17-21 having been amended and Claims 22-33 having been newly added by the present amendment.

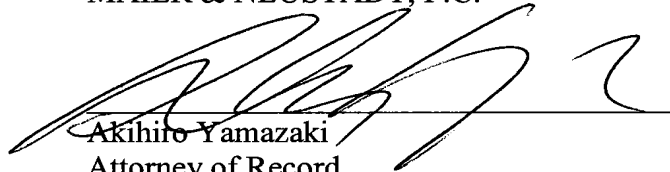
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 6, 10, 11 and 13-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Grandmont et al. (U.S. Patent 5,254,435) in view of Lundy et al. (U.S. Patent 6,329,123); and Claims 5, 7-9 and 12 were indicated as allowable.

First, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 5, 7-9 and 12 include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Claims 5, 7 and 12 have been rewritten in their respective independent forms, Claims 18, 19 and 21 have been amended to incorporate the subject matters recited in Claims 5 and 7, and new Claims 22-33 have been added to depend from either Claim 7 or 12. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that Claims 1-4, 10 and 11 be canceled without prejudice.

In view of the amendments and in light of the prior indication of the allowable subject matter, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. If, however, the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing amendments, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to resolve any remaining issues and expedite the prosecution of this application. Applicants respectfully request an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Akihiro Yamazaki', is written over a horizontal line.

Akihiro Yamazaki
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 46,155

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)

Edwin D. Garlepp
Registration No. 45,330